

## REMARKS

In the *Ex parte Quayle* action mailed March 22, 2006, the Examiner stated that the application is in condition for allowance except for certain formal matters.

In the specification, the Examiner noted several informalities. Applicants have now amended the specification to correct those informalities.

In the claims, the Examiner required cancellation of non-elected claims 12-20. Applicants have now amended the claims to cancel non-elected claims 12-20.

The Examiner also requested clarification regarding claim 4. The Examiner suggested that the recitation in claim 4 "wherein said oxygen barrier further comprises a silicon nitride layer" is unclear, citing to page 14, lines 12-14 of the specification. Those lines describe an embodiment in which "photoresist layer 124 and first silicon nitride layer 104 together act as an oxygen barrier to protect the magnetic bit, including magnetoresistive device layers 108, from exposure to oxygen."

In response, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has overlooked the fact that claim 4 is dependent on claim 3, and claim 3 recites "wherein said oxygen barrier comprises a photoresist layer." Thus, claim 4 specifies that the oxygen barrier comprises *both* a photoresist layer *and* a silicon nitride layer, consistent with the description at page 14, lines 12-14 of the specification.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the informalities in the application have been addressed and that the application is ready to proceed to allowance.

Date: May 18, 2006

By: Richard A. Machonkin  
Richard A. Machonkin  
Registration No. 41,962